

Haftarah for Minchah of Fast Days (Isaiah 55-6 to 56-8)

based on the translations of

Robert Alter, Aryeh Kaplan, Stone Edition Tanach, JPS, W. Gunther Plaut, Jerusalem Bible, New King James Bible

modeled after the recording in *Navigating the Bible II*:

<http://bible.ort.org/books/haftarotd4.asp?action=displaypage&book=6&chapter=55&verse=6&portion=87>

55:6 Seek YHWH [while He can be found]. [Call upon Him] while He is yet near.

7 [Let him forsake]—[the wicked man]—his way; the man of iniquity—his intentions.

[Let him return] to YHWH [and His compassion], [and to our God], Who is rich in forgiveness.

8 [For indeed], [not are] [My thoughts] as [your thoughts], nor are your ways, [like My ways]; [thus declares] YHWH.

9 For as high as are the heavens, [above the earth],

[in just this way], higher [are My ways] [than your ways], [and My thoughts] [than your thoughts].

10 [For indeed], [just as] [there comes down] the rain and the snow [from the heavens], and thither it does not return,

[but rather] it waters the earth [and brings forth] vegetation, [and provides us] with seed for sowing and with bread for eating.

11 [In such a way] [shall be] My word that proceeds [from My mouth]: it shall not return to Me empty,

but rather performs that which I desire, [and it achieves] what I sent it to do.

12 [For in joy] [you will go out], and in peace [you will be led].

The mountains [and all the hills] [will burst forth] [before you] in singing, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

13 Instead of the thornbush [there shall come up] the cypress, and instead of the nettle [will come up] a myrtle.

[It shall stand] to YHWH as a testimony (*shem*)—a sign everlasting, that shall not be effaced.

56:1 Thus says YHWH, “Maintain justice, and act with righteousness,
 [since soon] will My salvation arrive, [and My triumph] will be revealed.
 2 Happy is the man [who does this], [and the son of man] [who holds fast] [to it],
 keeping the sabbath unprofaned, and keeping his hand from doing all evil.”
 3 [Let it not be said] [by the foreigner], [who has joined himself] to YHWH, [speaking like this]:
 “[God has kept me apart]—[I have been excluded] by YHWH from [His people].”
 [Let it not be said] by the eunuch, “[Surely, I] am a tree all dried up.”
 4 [For listen to these words] | spoken by YHWH,
 “To the eunuchs [who do] observe My sabbaths [and who choose] the things [that please Me], [and who hold fast] to My covenant,
 5 I will give to them—[in My house] [and within My walls]—a memorial and a name (*yad va shem*),
 [better still] than sons and daughters—a name everlasting [I give to them], [that never shall] be effaced.
 6 And as [for the foreigners] [who join] with YHWH in order [to serve Him], and to love the name “YHWH”, [to be to Him] as servants:
 [all who do] [keep the sabbath] unprofaned, [and who hold fast] [to My covenant],
 7 [I will surely bring them] to [My holy mountain], [and make them joyful] in My [house of prayer].
 [All their burnt-offerings] [and all their sacrifices] [shall be welcome] on My altar.
 Indeed My house as a house of prayer shall be proclaimed, [for all people].”
 8 Thus says the Lord *Elohim* (YHWH), Who gathers [the dispersed ones] of Israel:
 “[There are others besides] [end melody] that I will gather with Israel—[to the ones already gathered].”

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate the following pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which will have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
 Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
 Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
 The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
 JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
 Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
 Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
 Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
 The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
 The New King James Bible (1982)